

Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP)

The Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) was established in 2001 to help less developed countries preserve their cultural heritage and to demonstrate U.S. respect for other cultures.

To date, the Ambassador's Fund has supported more than 500 projects, worldwide, totaling \$14.5 million. Funded projects include technical support for the restoration of historic buildings; assessment and conservation of museum collections; archaeological site preservation; documentation to save threatened traditional crafts; improved storage conditions for archives and manuscripts; recordings of oral histories; and documentation of indigenous languages.

The Cultural Heritage Center of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of State administers the AFCP and supports other foreign affairs functions of the Department that relate to the protection and preservation of cultural heritage.

AFCP Projects in the Kyrgyz Republic

2009: \$52,600 for Preservation and Popularization of Unique Archeological and Ethnological Collection of Museum Chamber of the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavonic University.



2008: \$35,000 for Conservation of Rare Books in the Kyrgyz National Library, Issyk-Kul Regional Library, and libraries of the Kyrgyz National Academy of Science and Kyrgyz State National University



2006: \$51,00 for Preservation and restoration of the unique Golden Collection at the Kyrgyz State Museum of History



2002: \$24,000 for Preservation of the unique 11th century mausoleum Shakh-Fazil in Safid-Bulan village, Jalal-Abad oblast



**Project on preservation and popularization
of unique archaeological and ethnological collection
of museum chamber of the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavonic University**

AFCP grant will be awarded to preserve a unique collection of artifacts at the Kyrgyz Russian Slavic University. The artifacts have been excavated and collected over the last couple decades – many of the pieces have been brought up from the floor of Lake Issyk Kul. The collection includes: Sacae sacrificial kettles; ceramics of the Sacae-Usun period; golden pieces, accessories, earrings from the 5th to 1st c BC; wooden funeral items of the Great Resettlement Epoch; findings from the catacomb tomb of the ancient settlement of Kan Dobo; unique Turgesh coins and many other items.

The 18-months project envisages renovation and equipping a new museum space in the main building of the university where the collection will be moved to provide proper conditions for storage of the collection and public access to the collection.



Bronze boilers from the 5th to 2nd centuries BC, parts of a sacrificial complex from the Sacae epoch



Wooden table and utensils, the Great resettlement epoch from the 2nd to 4th centuries AD

Conservation of Rare Books in the Kyrgyz National Library, Issyk-Kul Regional Library, and libraries of the Kyrgyz National Academy of Science and Kyrgyz State National University

The AFCP grant enabled the preservation of 120 rare books about the history of Kyrgyzstan and the region that are kept in repositories of the Kyrgyz National Library, Issyk-Kul Regional Library, the Kyrgyz National Academy of Science library and the Kyrgyz State National University library.

The project also provided training of the staff of these libraries, comprehensive inventories of their rare and valuable publications, creation of databases of the books, restoration and preservation, digitizing of selected books, and the provision of public access to digital copies of the books at each of the libraries. Also, the digitized collection of books is available at www.rarebooks.net.kg.

The preserved scientific heritage of the Kyrgyz people, and their contribution to history, culture, science and enlightenment of the region will hopefully attract researchers and scientists to visit Kyrgyzstan to study the books.



Books at the Kyrgyz National Academy of Science library

Preservation and restoration of the unique Golden Collection at the Kyrgyz State Museum of History

A second AFCP grant allowed the Kyrgyz State Museum of History to preserve and display its rich collection of gold objects. The museum is the biggest in the country and the only one that has a rich gold collection. The collection totals about 2000 items, reflecting the history and culture of the Kyrgyz nation over the last 4000 years.

The most ancient archaeological artifacts are made from bronze and gold, and are from the Bronze Age (II millennium BC) and the Scythian period (VII-V centuries BC). Many of the collection's finer pieces come from an archaeological excavation of the Shamshi burial ground in the Chui Valley in 1958, which produced gold jewelry from the IV-V centuries AD. However, the collection was never before shown to the public and its condition was deteriorating due to the lack of necessary conditions for safe storage.

The AFCP project enabled the museum to create a database of the gold collection; preserve and restore the collection; train the museum curators on the restoration of precious metals; renovate and equip an exhibition room for safe storage and permanent display of the collection; and prepare and publicize a catalogue on the gold collection of the Kyrgyz State Museum of History.



*Fragments of Sacrificial Table
V-IV centuries BC*



*Earring With an Image of Two Falcons
VI-IV centuries BC*

Preservation of the unique 11th century mausoleum Shakh-Fazil in Safid-Bulan village, Jalal-Abad oblast



Interior decoration of the Mausoleum

The Shakh-Fazil mausoleum is an important part of the Kyrgyz Republic's architectural, cultural and religious history. It regularly attracts Muslim pilgrims and tourists from throughout the Fergana Valley and beyond. The restored Mausoleum is not only a place for worship, but also for scientific research and for tourists and locals alike to learn about the architectural and cultural history of the Fergana Valley.

The 13-month project entailed researching and restoring the mausoleum's roof and dome, and conserving its ornamentation. It proceeded in the following stages:

- Formation of a Board of oversight, consisting of representatives from the Ministries of Education and Culture, U.S. Embassy Bishkek, UNESCO, the Kazyiat of Jalal-Abad oblast, and the state archeologist;
- Analysis of archival documents in Tashkent, Almaty and Bishkek on previous restorations of the Shakh-Fazil mausoleum;
- Preliminary exploration of the mausoleum: examination of its condition, selection of samples for biochemical analysis, laboratory tests, and production of life-size drawings of its décor;
- Development of methods and selection of technology for the conservation;
- Reconstruction of scaffolding, construction of a drainage system, and installation of hygrometers.



Restoration work